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3 All We Have Is Time

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5 Relatives and Relations

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6 Our Bodies, Our Selves

Are we our bodies or do we have bodies? Different concepts of the body, the gendered body, the physical body, the social body. Techniques and modifications of the body. Tattoos. Body parts and organ transplants. Traffic in body parts. Body image, advertisements, and eating disorders. Bodies before and after death.

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Reading: Deborah Kaspin, “Women Who Breed Like Rabbits and Other Mythical Beasts: The Cultural Context of Family Planning in Malawi”

7 Food for Thought

What constitutes food? What makes a meal? What does it mean to say that “food is love”? Relation of food to the environment. Fast food, slow food, genetically modified food (“Frankenfood”). Food and sex. Food and civility. Food and religion. Cooking.

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8 Clothing Matters

Clothing does more than cover the body; it is also a cultural index of age, gender, occupation, and class. Is it then true that “clothes make the man”? Haute couture, sweat shops, clothing, and the economy.

Exercises
Reading: Julio Ramón Ribeyro, “Alienation (An Instructive Story with a Footnote)”

9 VIPs: Very Important People, Places, and Performances

Certain people, places, events, and cultural practices become iconic; they embody cultural myths or epitomize cultural values. Why are certain people described as “larger than life”? Why are certain places sites of pilgrimage or reverence? The global circulation of such icons.

Exercises
Reading: Clifford Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man”